



# Esprit de Corps

A Bulletin of the Washington Service Corps



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## Ready\*Corps preparedness at SERVES

By Otis Jacobsen ,  
VISTA Leader

Are you ready? Everyone attending the SERVES conference in Ocean Shores last October had the opportunity to answer that question at the Ready\*Corps Disaster and Emergency Preparedness booth.

More specifically, the question was "are you disaster and/or emer-

gency prepared?"

VISTA member Carrie Akerstrom and I collected materials and planned the information booth as our Community Action Project.

We wanted to reach out to the approximately 700 AmeriCorps and VISTA members attending SERVES and give them information about preparedness. There were plenty of pamphlets and brochures along with some free samples of earthquake putty, hand sanitizer, and emergency



(Above) Ready\*Corps members Carrie Akerstrom (Everett Emergency Management) and Alanna Beebe (Seattle-King County Public Health) talk with members about disaster preparedness.

whistles.

Most of the members who stopped by the booth eagerly spoke to us about disaster preparedness.

"It is amazing how many people shared stories of their first hand experience dealing with emergencies in their personal lives," said Carrie Akerstrom. She noted that the project was quite popular and well-received by conference attendees.

The result of the project was positive feedback on how important it is to keep our

communities informed about emergency and disaster preparedness. Special thanks to the VISTA members who assisted Carrie and me. They are: Alanna Beebe, Seattle/King County Public Health, Ashley Fernandez, City of Kent Emergency Management Department; Heather Kitchen, City of Auburn Emergency Management Department; Elaine Parker, City of Everett Emergency Management Department and Alexander Domesle, King County Office of Emergency Management Department.

## Director's Corner

It is my pleasure to serve as the acting director of the Washington Service Corps. Being involved in the Service Corps and working with our local partners who support our members, has been one of the most rewarding positions I've held in my work history.

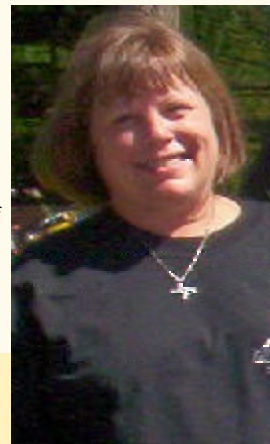
Every autumn, with the start of the new program year, I note the renewed energy and spirit that members bring to our program.

From those who have come from out of state to serve, to our local recruits, Service Corps members bring their perspectives, experiences, passion and dedication to their work across the state.

Thank you for choosing the Washington Service Corps program for your AmeriCorps and VISTA experience. We look forward to seeing the won-

derful things you will accomplish this year as you serve the residents of Washington State.

*Terri Barbee, Acting Director of the Washington Service Corps.*



## First stop - Ocean Shores! October 2007 SERVES

*By Kristi Courtmach, IMAC Member*  
What do you call it when you cram six seminars, food, service projects, a dance, bingo, learning, networking, and sleep into three days? Easy! SERVES.

The jam-packed three day conference, held Oct. 16 to 18, was a great opportunity to learn new things and meet new people for the more than 700 Washington Service Corps members there. Members from all over the state descended on Ocean Shores, took every available hotel room and enriched their AmeriCorps experiences.

SERVES, which stands for Skills Education Resources Volunteers Empowerment Synergy (who would have guessed?), is a state-wide event attended by all Washington Service Corps members. It's six workshop sessions provide training that will support members in their year of service. Some of the courses taught how to work well with staff and students, others taught volunteer management, diet and budgeting.

A few classes had to do with life after AmeriCorps, such as how to get the most from your education award. Additionally, the event was an opportunity for hundreds of members to network with each other and learn what different teams and individuals are doing across the state.

Bill Basl, executive director of the Washington State Commission for National and Community Service, welcomed the members and discussed a very extensive article about national service featured in a recent edition of Time Magazine.

Members of the Quinault Ocean Canoe Society were on hand to share their culture and welcome Service Corps to their land. They



*Bill Basl, Executive Director of the WA State Commission for National and Community Service speaks to 700+ members.*

performed during the opening and gave two workshops about the history of the Quinault Tribe during the conference.

Another SERVES will take place in March, this time in Yakima. It will feature new workshops about "Life After AmeriCorps".



*Members of the Quinault Ocean Canoeing Society "paddle in" to the opening ceremony at SERVES in Ocean Shores.*

# Civic engagement gets off to a good start

*By Lucas Morse, IMAC Member*

Family Enrichment Night was one of those evenings to remember for everyone who attended. The Intermountain AmeriCorps Service & Education Team (SET) members held their event at the Brethren Baptist Church in Wenatchee on Friday, November 9. The event was part of their required AmeriCorps civic engagement curriculum.

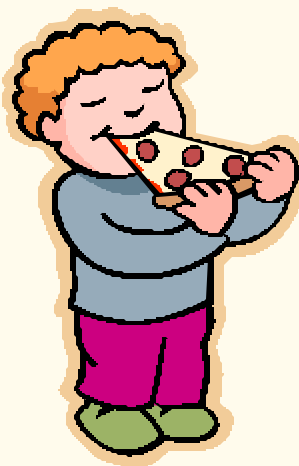
The Civic Engagement program was designed to help the youths in our local communities identify needs and concerns that require attention. The SET members identified poverty as their main focus and decided to plan a community dinner with a special emphasis on family enrichment. The event was designed as an opportunity for community members (parents and children) to come together to eat, to learn

new things about our community, to have fun games and enrichment activities, to do some homework, to meet new people and to celebrate everyone's strengths and talents as a group.

In order to make sure everything ran smoothly the members of the SET planned all the details that would make the night a success for three weeks in advance. SET members even arrived an hour and a half early, at 4 p.m. to organize last-minute details on the day of the event.

The theme of the meal was pizza. Ingredients were purchased through a generous donation made by a local community member. Families designed their own individual pizzas, which allowed them to be together and work on a "project" they could then eat and enjoy after it was cooked.

While the pizzas cooked, the families played games, listened to music, made crafts and took advantage of a homework help center. The adults and the children all enjoyed the activities.



## Making a difference

*By Vernita Adolf, Supervisor, OIC*

"Make A Difference Day" is the nationwide day of helping others - a celebration of neighbors helping neighbors and everyone can take part.

Created by USA WEEKEND Magazine, Make a Difference Day takes place on the fourth Saturday of every October. Last year, that was on Oct. 27, 2007 and the Washington Reading Corps members of the Opportunities Industrialization Center of Wash. decided to make a difference in the lives of residents at the Sunnyside Hospice Program. The Hospice works with families in end-of-life situa-

tions and they wanted to beautify the parking lot with flowers and trees for the families that go through this process.

The team removed a mile-long fence that was old and ugly. They cleaned the yard and parking lot and then hauled everything to the dump. In the spring, members will go back to plant some flowers and help build parking bumpers and paint parking strips.

The team received a very nice letter from the Hospice Program thanking them for all of the work they did. They were very happy to see that old fence gone and now they are looking forward to

making their parking lot more pleasing to the eye.





# AmeriCorps members assist Pierce County With Project Homeless Connect

*By Otis Jacobsen, VISTA Leader*

On Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>, 50 AmeriCorps members gathered at the Tacoma Dome Exhibition Center to participate in Project Homeless Connect (PHC), which is an event that provides a wide range of free services to the homeless people living in the Tacoma/Pierce County area.

While the main focus was on health issues, there were a variety of services available. Qualifying participants were able to choose from medical, dental, or vision services. All services were provided by certified professionals donating their time and effort to help the homeless.

By mid-morning the crowds started to swell. Things could have gotten hectic if not for the 450 volunteers recruited to help guide people to the different stations. Volunteer coordinator Josh Proehl, project supervisor with the Community Youth Services Washington Reading Corps team, instructed volunteers on proper procedure and says everything went as

planned.

At the end of the day, it was astounding the number of people that received services:

- 500 people went through the intake process
- 240 people received flu vaccinations
- 90 patients received prescriptions
- 150 patrons received dental screenings
- 120 patients went to the mobile dentist offices in the parking area
- 71 individuals received eye screenings
- 176 pairs of glasses were repaired or adjusted

- 46 individuals got legal services
- 75 people received Social Security services
- 100 people completed food stamp applications

In addition to the professional services available there were other attractions, which participants referred to as "freebies". These included personal hygiene products, shoes, clothing, hats, and food coupons. Several barbers stayed busy all day giving an unrecorded number of haircuts.

At the end of the day, people commented on the day's activities, expressing thanks and strong emotions; a few were overwhelmed.

When asked what they thought the most important service of the day was, 50 percent of the participants said "everything". Seventy percent said they got just what they needed. Of the volunteers that completed an exit evaluation, 99 percent said they would come back and do it again.



*Community Youth Services Project Supervisor Erica Stillman enjoys a quick break with three of her members.*

## WSC receives "Large Group Volunteer award"

*By Terri Jack, WSC Program Manager*

The Pierce County Coalition for the Homeless awarded the Washington Service Corps and the AmeriCorps members who volunteered at Project Homeless Connect with the "Large Group Volunteer Award"; presented at an award ceremony in Tacoma on Nov. 16. Fifty AmeriCorps members from Grays Harbor, Lewis, Thurston, Kitsap and Pierce counties served guests at entry, intake, food, and exit stations. They also acted as volunteer guides. Volunteer coordinator Josh Proehl (who used to be a Washington Service Corps VISTA leader) recruited, encouraged, trained and supervised those 50 and many more, all of whom were essential to the success of the event.

# There's a new DNP in Town

By Sonia Prazak, VISTA Leader

The Washington Service Corps Disability Navigator Project (DNP) helps job seekers who have disabilities navigate around Washington's WorkSource system.

## WorkSource Tip!

Go2WorkSource.com—the State of Washington's official site for online employment services.

Find a job, get job search help, locate workforce services in your area, access career information and more.

There are twelve slots for VISTA members in WorkSource offices across the state where they will assist with improving the access, services and outcomes WorkSource staff and partners provide.

Through the One Stop Career Center system, DNP gives people with disabilities the opportunity to get jobs and gain economic self-sufficiency.

Also, the VISTA members serve with local disability access teams that conduct outreach activities for disability organizations, school district transition programs, service providers and employers. The activities are designed to make the groups aware of the services available for differently-abled job seekers in their communities and how to work effectively with them.

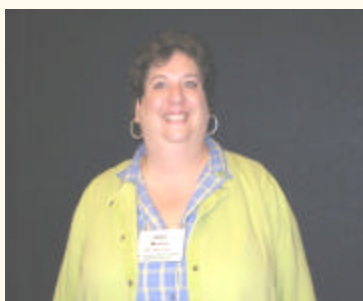
Currently, the VISTA members working on the Disability Navigator Project are Jackie Lopez with Thurston County WorkSource; Aimee Pino in Cowlitz County; Simon Wani in Pierce County; Kelly Welter with North Seattle; Janet Davis in Everett; Sunnie Bell in Okanogan; Derek Ward in the Columbia Basin; Jacob Craft in Spokane, Freda Tepfer in Walla Walla; and Amy Cooper in Yakima.

I am the newest VISTA Leader in the Washington Service Corps office and will be supporting these members' efforts. I wish them luck and pass on these empowering words from Marian Wright Edelman, "A lot of people are waiting for Martin Luther King or Mahatma Gandhi to come back - they are gone. We are it! It is up to you."



Sonia Prazak, new VISTA Leader with the Washington Service Corps.

# Mentoring Children of Incarcerated Parents



Linda Blomberg, current MCIP VISTA member in Yakima, WA

By Linda Blomberg

Before I joined VISTA and became one of thousands dedicated to national service, my greatest achievement was raising three boys to become wonderful young men. Today, that is nearly rivaled by the gratification and fulfillment I receive through being program coordinator for the Mentoring Children of Incarcerated Parents Program.

While all aspects of my position are interesting and rewarding (yes, even the paperwork), my greatest pleasure came when I matched the last of the four remaining children on my list five days before Christmas. If there was ever a most precious gift, the caring individuals who make this possible have given it to me.

Let me tell you about Aaron and Troy, who are just a few weeks from their 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary. Aaron, assistant general manager for the Yakima Bears baseball team, has seen the positive effects of mentoring in Troy's life. "He is doing phenomenally" said Aaron. The lowest grade he is getting is a B-, compared to D's and F's last year. And he is thinking about trying out for the baseball team." Like Aaron, the other 17 mentors in my program share not only their time, but also their hearts with these children who might otherwise find it hard not to follow the path a parent has taken. I encourage each and every one of you to consider becoming a guiding light in a child's life. It doesn't take much but it makes a world of difference.

# WSC Individual Placement (IP) Program

The Washington Service Corps Individual Placement Program began in 1983 as a youth corps program. Since then, and the subsequent start of the AmeriCorps program in 1994, Individual Placement has more than tripled in size.

Agencies that partner with the Individual Placement Program host one to four members who address the community's educational, environmental, public safety and human service needs. The articles on these two pages highlight some of the Individual

Placement projects and members across the state. For more information about hosting members through the Individual Placement Program, or to enroll as a member, please contact the program's manager, Brigid Spellman, at 360-438-4045.

## Slum Doctor Programme and AIDS/HIV education

*By Jesse Papineau, Supervisor*

Thirty high school students fidget and gossip at the beginning of class until their attention is suddenly captured by a map of the world and a few numbers scattered across its continents. The numbers are so big that the zeros aren't written out. 39.5 million—at that moment the importance and the reality of what is being taught is sobering and yet there is also the excitement of deep hope.

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) hit the United States in the early 1980s and then hit sub-Saharan Africa. Just as the U.S. got a handle on the situation, Africa began bearing the cross it has been forced to carry for the last 25 years, without a moment of relief. It is reported that more than two-thirds of all people currently infected with HIV live in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Washington Service Corps/AmeriCorps-funded Global AIDS Education program has been able to give hundreds of high school students in Whatcom County the tools and knowledge neces-

sary to realize, "if I don't, no one will" and do something about it. (The Global AIDS Education Program is sponsored by the Bellingham-based Slum Doctor Programme, a non-profit organization that provides medicine, food, education and dignity to people affected by AIDS in Africa.)

Last year the Slum Doctor Programme hosted individual placement members for the first time. Service Corps members Marissa McGrath and I, along with many volunteers educated more than 600 students about the AIDS

pandemic. Now in its second year under the direction of the individual-placement member Paige Lamb, the Global AIDS curriculum will expand to middle schools as well as high schools in Whatcom County.

Each student taught becomes another advocate, another donor, another human being that sees the effect AIDS has on the world, whether it is visible in his or her community or not.

"We are thankful that Washington Service Corps has joined us in this quest. We hope there will be

many programs just like this in the near future. The people at Slum Doctor Programme believe that the generation that has never known a time without AIDS should be the generation that sees the end of it."



*Former AmeriCorps member Jesse Papineau plays chess with Wesley Babour, a new friend from his recent trip to*



# Washington Water Trails

By Emily Slotnick, IP Member

"I'm sure there are more than enough people signed up to help, I guess I won't bother."

Perhaps that was the thought running through the minds of many Washington Water Trails Association (WWTa) volunteers in the weeks before Nov. 17, the date planned for a new Cascadia Marine Trail campsite work party at Saltwater State Park in Des Moines, Washington.

As I stared at an inbox full of cancellations 24 hours before the work party was set to begin, I realized only one name was left on the volunteer roster. With one dedicated volunteer and two WWTa staff members, installing 170 linear feet of native plants, and erecting a new bulletin board sign, I was seeing a very long day ahead. And the weatherman wasn't helping either. He predicted heavy rain.

It is no news that WWTa relies heavily on a large network of volunteers. My position as community involvement coordinator would not exist without them. At 10:00 a.m. that Friday morning, I sent out an e-mail with "HELP!" in the subject line to all friends and volunteers in WWTa's database.

**"If you think the efforts of one individual will be nothing, then you have never been to bed with a mosquito."  
~ Betty Reese**



The response was almost immediate. Phone and e-mail messages from willing participants stated "I think I can make it", "My girlfriend and I will plan to show up," and "Count me in". Things were looking up. With enough volunteers to sufficiently complete the work in Des Moines, the WWTa employees went home that afternoon with high hopes for the next day's work party.

The morning of Nov 17, there were 16 volunteers buzzing around the site, plus two WWTa employees and one park ranger. No mind was paid to the torrential rain and dropping temperature as volunteers marked off borders, raised signs, and put plants in the ground. The work that would have taken a couple people all day was accomplished in less than an hour. The morning was the definition of success in the face of adversity—a true testament to how a little bit of help and the combined efforts of individuals can make a major difference.

## Thanksgiving in Ellensburg

By Stu Spence, IP Supervisor

On Nov 21, Individual Placement members Kristen Evans and Kimberlee Holmes, with generous support from community seniors, youth, service clubs, and local businesses held Ellensburg's 12th Annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner. Co-sponsored by the Ellensburg Youth & Community Center and the Ellensburg Adult Activity Center the event was a tremendous success, serving more than 400 people on the day before Thanksgiving.



Members worked hard to gain local support for the event and made it free for all. Donations included 22 turkeys from the Kiwanis Club, and a \$1000 donation from the local Rotary. They mobilized more than 50 young and senior volunteers to cook, carve the turkeys and serve the meal. The event was an amazing community collaboration and the Washington Service Corps members were at the center, coordinating it all.

# *Washington State* **SERVICE CORPS**

EMPLOYMENT SECURITY DEPARTMENT



## **Upcoming Important Dates/Events**

**Jan 21—MLK, Jr.  
Day of Service**

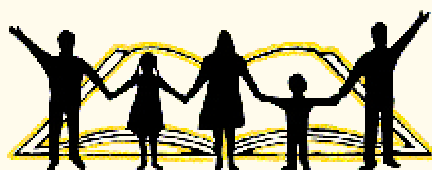
**March 11-13  
SERVES**

**NW Network  
March 17-19**

**April 28—May 2  
National  
Volunteer Week**

**May 12-13  
NW Service  
Symposium**

**May 19-22  
Supervisor  
Training and  
Technical  
Assistance  
Meeting**



**WASHINGTON  
READING CORPS**

*Washington State*  
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